

15 August 2006

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Darral

Co-operative Identity Program – Board members and Senior management

Thank you for talking with me earlier today about your Co-operative. As mentioned, the Co-operative Federation of Victoria has developed a relationship with the Co-operative College (Manchester, England) to offer and provide customised education programs for Australian co-operatives.

This collaboration provides an opportunity for us to bring to Australian co-operatives the experience and skills that the College has acquired over nearly a century of developing and delivering programs specifically designed for co-operatives in the United Kingdom and other Countries. In particular the College has been instrumental in the co-operative revival that has occurred in the United Kingdom in recent times.

We know that many co-operators in this Country maintain a strong commitment to co-operative identity and a desire to see the co-operative sector grow. But the absence of co-operative specific education programs here means that in most cases they don't know how to go about achieving this. There has been a lack of trainers and resources that could help them better understand the co-operative difference and how the application of co-operative values could actually help them in an increasingly competitive global market place.

In September last year the College CEO Mervyn Wilson visited Australia and met with a number of co-operatives in Victoria and Western Australia. These meetings further demonstrated to him, the urgent need for the development of co-operative education in Australia. Two co-operatives, Murray Goulburn Co-op Company and Capricorn Society Ltd. confirmed that they wanted strategies for member education. Both recognised the need to be able to communicate their co-operative difference and goals to members, employees and other stakeholders.

The College has worked with major co-operatives on co-operative identity and co-operative education programs for many years and their experience is that these programs only succeed with drive and commitment from senior management and board members.

Hence the Co-operative Identity Program for Board members and Senior Managers should be seen as a first stage in developing an overall strategy for co-operative education for the Co-operative.

It is designed to assist the Board and senior management to identify and clarify:

- The Co-operative identity and purpose.
- Current strengths as a co-operative.
- The link between co-operative education and business goals and strategy.
- The core components of an on-going education program and where and with whom they need to be undertaken.
- Further work needed before rolling out programs for members, staff and other stakeholders.

The customised Identity Program is of two days duration and its format is outlined in the document enclosed for your perusal.

If you are at all interested in talking with me about this Program I would be quite happy to get together with you sometime in Batlow. Murray Goulburn and Capricorn are actually undertaking the program over the next month, but we would like to think that one or two other co-operatives might be interested in the program perhaps early next year.

Again, thanks for getting back to me today and I hope we have the opportunity for another chat in the not too distant future.

Regards

Graeme Charles
Deputy Chairman